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## Conversations About Research Ethics

### CARE

The CARE program is a year-long university-wide series of faculty-led conversations related to the ethical issues that arise from engaging in research. There is a need to explore not only the ethical importance of research at Ohio State University, but also the ethical problems that come up in the process of conducting research and the manner in which our university community members address these challenges across the disciplines. The panel discussions we host will **create opportunities for researchers across the OSU campus to engage in a more comprehensive and critical reflection about the ethical ramifications of the way they conduct their research.**

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# Research Ethics in Humanitarian Crises

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# Types of Humanitarian Crises

- Acute vs Protracted Humanitarian Crises
- Humanitarian situations outside “crisis”
- Survivors of emergency situations are vulnerable populations that need special protection from exploitation.



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# Evidence Based Practice in Humanitarian Crises

- Challenge of Guidelines in a dynamic, diverse field
- Paucity of evidence to guide response in disaster settings<sup>1</sup>
- 1 percent of published disaster research articles are about Lower and Middle Income countries
- Of that 1 percent, 80% are authored by researchers from high resource countries<sup>1</sup>



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# Choosing a Research Question

- The question it itself should in some way benefit the victims of the crisis: The topic should be relevant and appropriate
- ***Research should always be responsive to the needs of the victims of the emergency.***
- ***Only research that does not hinder or obstruct effective and appropriate interventions should be carried out***
- ***Research should improve interventions and/or local capacity to respond to the current or future emergency<sup>2</sup>***



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# Methods

- Access
- Key persons and authorities
- Sampling
- Scientific Rigour



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# Ethics Review Board

- Pre approval
- Exemptions
- Alternatives to ERB



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# Respect for Persons

- Informed Consent
- Power Dynamic
- Trust/ Relationships



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# Non Maleficence

- Triggers/Mental Health
- Possible consequences of results
- Exploitation
- Ensure relief efforts are not hampered



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# Beneficence

***“While the baseline of ‘do no harm’ is recognized as an important starting point, there is a growing sense that research into human suffering ought only to be justifiable if it contributes to the ending of that suffering<sup>3</sup>***

- Must be appropriate for the study population
- Compensation vs incentive
- Implementation/interventional science (sustainability)
- Ensure scientific rigour
- Data dissemination strategy



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# Justice

- Participant selection
- Community Leaders
- Beneficence



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# Recommendations for Researchers

- Start early and think of ethics from research question – data dissemination and impact of study
- Ensure basic needs of your study population are met before beginning
- Submit for ethics review early
- Collaborate with key persons from the community from the start
- Ensure key persons are representative of the community including the marginalized groups within the community
- Assess for an appropriate compensation



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# References

1. Kirsch TD., 2005 The Washington Post. 2015
2. Ethical challenges in conducting research in humanitarian crisis situations. Joseph Mfutso-Bengo, Francis Masiye, Adamson Muula. Malawi Medical Journal, 20(2):46 - 49 June 2008
3. When 'Do No Harm' Is Not Enough: The Ethics of Research with Refugees and Other Vulnerable Groups. Richard Hugman, Eileen Pittaway, and Linda Bartolomei. British Journal of Social Work (2011) 41, 1271–1287



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